

Reflection on Assisting a Special Education Teacher- August 2010

For this activity, I assisted one of the special education teachers at my school with her classroom computers. This particular teacher was brand new to the district and seemed to be overwhelmed at the beginning of the school year. When speaking with her, I found out that she did not even know how to plug in the classroom computers and turn them on. I explained to her that she needed to plug in the power cords for both the CPU and the monitor. I also mentioned to her that if she wanted internet access, the internet cord would have to be plugged into an internet outlet. I was a bit astounded by the lack of knowledge this teacher had with basic technology. When I asked her if she had a personal computer at home, she said that her husband is the one who is in charge of making it work for her. Interactions with this teacher really required me to be an active listener in order to enable me to meet her needs adequately. Active listening allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of her needs (Harris, Edmonson, & Combs, 2010).

After the computers were plugged on and the power was turned on, I demonstrated how to log on to the district network and showed the teacher how to access the various resources available. I explained what the different drives were for and then demonstrated how to make a file and save her own work on the district network.

After going through all of the basics, I introduced the district's student information system and the special education management system. This teacher required a lot of one-on-one assistance to learn both of the systems: Chancery and Encore, respectively. If I had to do it again, I would provide her with a document that lists various Chancery and Encore actions step-

by-step. Despite the difficulty this teacher had with learning these systems, she did eventually learn how to take attendance and write IEP's on her own.

Completing this activity really brought to light the fact that there are many levels of technology proficiency in school settings. Although it seems like everyone these days should know the basic steps of how to turn on a computer, the fact is they do not. This is extremely concerning given the fact that in order to make school more relevant to students, they must be given the opportunity to use technology (Prensky, 2008). If the teacher does not even know how to turn on the computer, the chances that she will use technology with her students are low. I will have to consider the technology proficiency of educators more closely in the future when planning technology-based professional development activities.

This activity helped me to meet the standards relating to demonstrating an in-depth understanding of technology operations and concepts; and promoting the development and implementation of technology infrastructure, procedures, policies, and plans in PK-12 schools (Williamson & Redish, 2009).

References

- Harris, S., Edmonson, S., & Combs, J. (2010). *Examining what we do to improve our school: 8 steps from analysis to action*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
- Prensky, M. (2008). Turning on the lights. *Educational leadership*, 65(6), 40-45.
- Williamson, J., & Redish, T. (2009). *ISTE's technology facilitation and leadership standards*. Washington, D.C.: International Society for Technology in Education.